

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is being filed concurrently herewith to further prosecute this application in view of the finality of the Office Action mailed March 24, 2003.

Claims 1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 19 have been amended and claims 17, 18 and 20 have been canceled hereby. Accordingly, claims 1-16 and 19 are presented for examination.

Preliminarily, while Applicants have filed an RCE in this case in view of the indicated finality of in the Office Action, Applicants believe that the finality of the second Office Action is improper since claims 4 and 8 were allowable in the first Office Action but were subsequently rejected in the second Office Action without giving Applicants a further chance of amending those claims.

In the Office Action, the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Burger (US 5,973,844). To the extent this ground of rejection may be applied to the claims now pending herein, it is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 1 now sets forth, among other things, that the light shield has a thickness greater than the apex height of each first lens surface, as clearly shown in Fig. 1 of the present application. With such a structure, it is possible to limit the light incident angle to a small range for providing better image formation. In U.S. Patent No. 5,973,844 to Burger, each inter-lenslet element 512 (Fig. 23) has a thickness which is much less than the apex height of each lenslet

505b. A similar limitation is also found in amended claim 12, which is, accordingly, also patentably distinct from Burger.

Amended 13 sets forth, among other things, that the first lens array includes a flat surface from which the first lens surfaces project, and grooves extending from the flat surface toward the second lens surfaces for optically separating the first lenses from each other, and that first light shielding means covers the flat surface of the first lens array and extends into each of the grooves. These newly added limitations are found in Fig. 17 of the present application. The first light shielding means extending into the grooves provides good optical separation between the first lens.

In Fig. 23 of Burger, each light shield 512 is considered to cover only the flat surfaces between the lenlets 505b. Thus, the invention as defined in amended claim 13 is believed to be patentably distinct from Burger.

Similar limitations are also found in amended claim 19, which accordingly is also believed to be patentably distinct from Burger.

Considering the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102(e) rejection of the claims.

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In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

MDB/LDE/ggb

Respectfully submitted,

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